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ABSTRACT

Traditional Danza Azteca-Chichimeca (an indigenous dance society) contains the elements required for the intergenerational revernacularization of an indigenous language, in this case classical Nahuatl. These requirements entail creating an intergenerational environment in which participants can gain prestige, friendship, and affection and can engage in community building and spiritual centering. This paper provides historical background on Danza and describes efforts of several Danza groups in Los Angeles, California, to bring back classical Nahuatl into daily use. The first sections of the paper discuss the linguistic classification and morphology of Nahuatl, the resistance of Mexico's indigenous peoples to Spanish during the postcontact and colonial periods, Mexican federal policies toward indigenous languages and identity since the Mexican Revolution, and the history of Mexican indigenous dance and dance societies. Grupos Unidos--a coalition of "danzantes" (dancers) in Los Angeles--was formed to better disseminate cultural and linguistic knowledge within Danza. Classes were held on Nahua history from an indigenous perspective, Danza steps, creation myths, indigenous musical instruments, and classical Nahuatl. Although most danzantes were native Spanish speakers, Nahuatl was the dominant indigenous language of origin. In ongoing classes, danzantes seek to learn Nahuatl using categorized trilingual word lists, dictionaries, and the total physical response method involving song and dance. The interconnectivity of Danza has served to spread the language reversal project from California to Texas to Mexico City. Contains 20 references and a list of 11 Nahuatl dictionaries and grammars. (SV)

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Teaching Indigenous Languages

Revernacularizing Classical Náhuatl Through Danza (Dance) Azteca-Chichimeca

Tezozomoc, Danza Azteca Huehueteotl, and Danza Azteca Tenochtitlan

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Revernacularizing Classical Náhuatl Through Danza (Dance) Azteca-Chichimeca

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Traditional Danza Azteca-Chichimeca contains the elements prescribed by Joshua Fishman at the 1995 Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium for the intergenerational re-vernacularization of an indigenous language. Fishman, described the consensual requirements for creating an environment where participants can interact in an intergenerational environment: can gain in prestige, friendship, and affection; and can participate in community building and spiritual centering—all of which provide the foundation for revernacularizing an indigenous language. This paper describes the efforts of several Danza groups in Los Angeles, California, to bring back Classical Náhuatl into daily use.

As we approach the new millennium indigenous languages around the world have little to rejoice over. Mass communication, transportation, and marketing are destroying indigenous languages, helping to bring the estimated 6,700 languages of the world to no more than 3,000. Furthermore, 40% of the remaining 3,000 languages are threatened from measurable declines as children fail to learn their mother tongue. This leaves no more than 600 stable languages, only 10% of world's languages. In North America approximately 155 indigenous languages survive, but 135 of them are in danger of becoming extinct within a generation or two (Crawford, 1995; Kraus, 1992).

The focus of this paper is Mexico, which has approximately 93 million people. Mexico has approximately 295 languages of which 289 remain; 60 of those are listed as Uto-Aztecan and 28 as Aztecan (Grimes, 1996). The importance of keeping these languages alive has been described by King (1994). She states how in one Huichol myth,

> the people and animals were dying of hunger because they did not know the name for maize; in another, the ancestors and wise men were turned into snakes, rats, and dogs because they did not know how to name the sun....Language permits not only the naming of the world but also the function of memory. In an oral culture, knowledge once acquired has to be constantly repeated; otherwise it would be lost. Every culture, whether predominantly oral or literate, teaches future generations not only how to speak but also how to think, receiving the categories of classification imposed by language in its cultural context. (p. 111)

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This statement is a strong argument for the need to recover an original language and cultural constructs, and it necessitates that the organic symbols, traditions, psycholinguistical constructs, and modes of viewing a cosmology still exist within a community, whether pure or syncretized.

What is the Náhuatl language?

Classical Náhuatl is classified under the Southern Uto-Aztecan group whose progenitor is Uto-Aztecan. The Proto Uto-Aztecan language family extends over a vast area of the Western United States and Mexico. Uto-Aztecan, while being variegated, has an anthropological record approximated at 5000 years. In the historical record this would put Proto Uto-Aztecan in the same time depth as Proto Indo-European languages (Langacker, 1977). According to Campbell and Karttunen,

> Náhuatl was a latecomer into Meso-America.... Only a few centuries before the Spanish conquest of Meso-America did the ancestors of the Náhuatl-speaking people come down from the northwest into central Mexico, leaving behind them a trail of peoples speaking related languages like: Hopi, Pima, Papago, Tarahumara, Yaqui, Cora and Huichol. (1989, p. 2)

By 1833 Classical Náhuatl was determined to be "extinct" according to the Summer Institute of Linguistics' documentation (Grimes, 1996). However, establishing the extinction of a language is a subjective and a political act because no one calls Shakespeare's English, "Classical English." Therefore, as Campbell and Karttunen have stated,

> Scholars of Náhuatl are accustomed to talk about "Classical Náhuatl" and "the modern dialects." This implies a gulf between immediately post-conquest Náhuatl and what is spoken today; yet the people who speak Náhuatl today are the descendants of the people who spoke it five centuries ago. (1989, p. 2)

Traditional linguistics tend to classify languages into three types: isolating, agglutinating, and inflecting. Examples of these types include Chinese as an isolate, Finnish as an agglutinate, and Indo-European as an inflected. According to previous classifications, the Uto-Aztecan family, and thus Náhuatl, would belong to the agglutinating group. In the process of agglutinating Náhuatl can create monosyllabic words such as "ya:" (to go) or more complex ones like "xictlacachi:huaz" (may you make him/her a person) through compounding and derivation (Campbell & Karttunen, 1989).

It is better to use a metaphor to explain the way word construction evolves in Náhuatl morphology. The verb is much like the dancer in the circle. The dancer is surrounded by prefixes and suffixes that have a fixed formulated morphological value and when analyzed and translated into what would be charac-

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terized in western thought as a word, in Náhuatl it would be "tlahtolli." Look at "xictlacachi:huaz". Here, the center of the sentence/word is "chi:hua" (to make, the center of action, the dancer), "tlaca" is a noun, meaning person, used as an adjective, "z" is a suffix that states a time of future, "xi" is an optative mode of speaking and it signifies "you," and finally "c" is the third person singular specific object. This sentence/word would translate as "(may) you-him/her-person-make-future," transliterating to "may you make him/her a person." Campbell and Karttunen go on to present another metaphor, "Náhuatl words—nouns and verbs—are something like onions, and what we need to do in order to understand Náhuatl or to compose anything in the language is to be able to peel off the layers to get to the stem, or—given the stem—to be able to wrap it up in the right layers and in the right order" (1989, p. 11). This is only a glimpse of the language, by no means an attempt to present the language [see Andrews (1975) and Campbell and Karttunen (1989) for more comprehensive presentations of Náhuatl].

Resistance

How did these Mesoamericans resist what Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1996) describes as the *Imaginary Mexico*, the internal-colonial vision for Mexico and how did the *Mexico Profundo*, what Bonfil calls the residual indigenous vision of the world, survive the European military and cultural assault? These two contradictory visions of Mexico, one an imaginary colonial model and the other an indigenous model of living with the land and continuing the cultural constructs of the indigenous survivors, are in a continued conflict. Batalla's three step model of resistance, innovation, and appropriation can be applied to the transformation of Náhuatl and the Nahua culture and how it has survived to its current state.

Resistance, the first step in Batalla's model, is a mechanism that has been employed overtly and covertly by all oppressed peoples around the world. An example of resistance includes the native who refuses to use fertilizer brought in from outside of the communities, and communities such as the one located in Coahuila who in 1909 "burned the school that had been built for them on the same day it was to be inaugurated" (Batalla, 1996). Other such examples abound in the annals of history. The second mechanism in Batalla's model is innovation. Examples include the use of metal drills to create hair pipe, snuff lids to create jingles, old tires to create huaraches (sandals), and metal cans for drinking water. Appropriation has been the third survivalist tactic of all Native American people. Every autochthonous group wants to have control over its technology. No one wants to be a slave to technology. Consider the appropriation of the horse into the North American life-style. Native Nahua people also have appropriated the Catholic religion as a surface cover for their indigenous customs, which they hide behind the face of Christian worship. We know from history that the Mesoamerican central plateau was militarily conquered on August 13, 1521, but because of these survival strategies this conquest did not

directly translate into a complete physical, cultural, and psychological surrender that myth would have us believe.

Lockhart's (1992) chronology of Spanish-Náhuatl contact validates Bonfil Batalla's model of resistance. In Lockhart's first stage the Spanish conquerors tried to impose their will on the indigenous people by eliminating the old culture both materially and spiritually (King, 1994). It follows that all the secular and religious activities would be handled through the language of the conqueror. However, the Spanish Crown was overwhelmed by the diversity of languages, the difficulty of transportation, and the isolation of many of the ethnic groups. The native people resisted the conqueror's language, and even though in 1550 Charles V decreed that all the natives were to be taught in Spanish, it was virtually impossible.

One effect of the encomienda system (the practice of assigning tracts of land and the indigenous inhabitants of that land to individual conquistadores) was that the natives were isolated from the rest of the Spaniards and only interacted through their priest. The church was unable to meet the needs of natives and was left with no recourse but to turn a blind eye to the needs of the King (King, 1994).

In 1534 the first printing press was introduced to the new world at the request of Bishop Zumarraga. In 1539 the first book to be published was a bilingual catechism in Spanish and Náhuatl. In the following years friars produced what later would be recognized as the most important records of Náhuatl and other Mexican indigenous languages. In 1547 Fray Andrés de Olmos produced the first Náhuatl grammar book. This was followed by Fray Alonso Rangel who translated the Christian doctrine into Otomí. In 1558 and 1559 Maturino Gilberti produced the first Tarascan grammar and dictionary (King, 1994).

This first stage can be seen as a period of intense resistance marked by Royal decrees that went unenforced. The friars discovered it was easier to convert the natives in their indigenous language. This process allowed the phonetic transcriptions of the indigenous languages to be written down and preserved for posterity. Such action on the part of the friars forced the Crown to accept Náhuatl and Mayan as the lingua franca of the natives. It was believed that Náhuatl and Mayan contained grammar and morphology similar to other local languages, and if people were converted in Náhuatl and Maya it would make it easier on the natives to accept Christianity (King, 1994).

The separation between stages one and two mirrored those events transpiring in Spain in the 1560's. In 1560 the Holy Office was established in New Spain, marking a great ideological shift in regard to Native languages. People such as Pedro Sánchez, a chronicler writing at that time, pointed out that the natives referred to their painted codices which were kept hidden by the Indians and read in their meetings. But even within the church itself there were those who questioned the suitability of native languages to transmit the essence of the scripture. In 1555, a group of friars from all three orders, the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians, became powerful enough to pressure the synod of Mexico to order the seizure of the collections of sermons in native languages.

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Many of these documents were destroyed by the Holy Inquisition. Even up to 1634 Philip IV was issuing orders for the clergy to devote themselves to teaching the natives Spanish so that they might better understand and adopt Spanish customs. The Indians themselves expressed no desire to learn Spanish, and local priests were content to teach Indians in their own languages, despite royal decrees in 1771, 1776, and 1778 from Charles III ordering Indians to be taught in Spanish. Meanwhile, in the secular arena the division of languages was still maintained. The Indian courts still dealt in native languages. This maintained a certain level of language maintenance, owing to the need for native scribes and translators (King, 1994).

The division between stage two and stage three is marked by the independence of Mexican colonial elites from Spain. With independence indigenous people were declared citizens of Mexico, which meant not having a linguistic buffer between the clergy and indigenous people. Such an event did away with the native courts that had fostered the maintenance of native languages. These events put the Mexico Profundo of the natives and the Imaginary Mexico of the elite in direct conflict, and the clergy could no longer act as a buffer between the two worlds. This led to conflicts such as the Tzeltzal-Tzotzil Rebellion of 1867, an uprising against local Mestizos. In 1870 and 1881 the Zapotec and Zoque indigenous people took up arms to demand independence. While these movements were unsuccessful, they shattered the myth of the submissive Native. Even up to the late 1800's government documents were still drawn up in native languages. One such example is a law passed in 1866 by Maximilian providing communal lands to groups of people. The documents were drawn up in both Spanish and Náhuatl. Also, consider the work of Leon Portilla on Emiliano Zapata who wrote his communiqués from Milpa Alta in Náhuatl (King, 1994).

The movement towards the Mexican Revolution, which began in the 1880's, marked a clear break from stage three. Here, the mestizo identity was forming with such authors as Vasconcelos who perpetuated the dream of a new race, "La Raza Cósmica." This cosmic race did nothing more than try to further erase any indigenous characteristics from Indian psyches. Its attempts were focused on moving away from an original cultural perspective to one imported from the outside. Here the cientificos, the scientists, had imported a European cultural perspective and market economy. This was epitomized by Porfirio Diaz, of Zapotec blood, who powdered his face white every morning.

The movement to erase Mexico Profundo was most effective through the use of rural schools, and such efforts as those of Rafael Ramiréz, who wrote "Como dar a todo México un idioma" (How to provide a common language for all of Mexico). Ramiréz warned rural teachers, "You will begin by getting used to the local language, then gradually you will start adopting local customs, then their inferior way of life, and finally you also will become an Indian" (as quoted in King, 1994, p. 63).

While the work of Lockhart (1992) and King (1994) has been used extensively to document language and its change in this paper, it is necessary to offer

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a fifth stage beyond what they discuss. One that appropriates the tools of education and self-determination. To not incorporate such a stage would be to ignore the model of resistance, even if the vision is against all odds.

Stage five marks an overt clash of two visions, one indigenous (Mexico Profundo) and the other imaginary (Imaginary Mexico), as Bonfil Batalla has proposed. On the one hand, the state has a narcissistic perception of itself and wants to force its preferred marketable identity on the population, without regard to indigenous needs. This was pointed out by speeches of the Chamber of Deputies from post-revolution to present as described by King (1994). At issue was whether to incorporate or integrate indigenou people through linguistic unification (Castellanización, or the teaching of Spanish) or through acculturation. Little attention was paid to the needs of indigenous people or whether they were going to buy into such a solution.

In 1936 the Autonomous Department of Indian affairs was established to adopt a more liberal stance on indigenous languages. Bilingual education was proposed and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) was hired to provide the technical expertise. In 1939, the first Assembly of Philologists and Linguists and the Consejo de Lenguas Indígenas again selected SIL to provide applied linguistics literacy. In 1948, the National Indian Institute was created to deal with Indian literacy and they continued to use SIL for their literacy arm. SIL continued to provide literacy training up till the 1970's when they were discredited by linguists such as Bravo Ahuja who,

> Analyzed a total of 883 literacy materials produced by the SIL between 1935 and 1974. She found that, in the majority of cases, the primers were both pedagogical and linguistically unsound in their approach to teaching Spanish as a second language. Over two-thirds of the materials included in her sample introduced the language by means of isolated words, grouped into semantically unconnected lists, having in common only the use of the same phoneme. (King, 1994, pp. 116-117)

During the mid 1960's anthropologist like Bonfil Batalla began to develop the model of internal colonialism where "Indian groups were not simply cultural remnants of the pre-Hispanic past but rather exploited groups in specific regional, identifiable by ethnic Indian regions" (King, 1994, p. 65). Consciousness of the state of indigenous affairs and the educational system allowed the emergence of Indigenous organizations that challenged the Imaginary Mexico. Some of these individuals, the rural teachers and other community members, had originally been trained to serve as brokers between indigenous people and the mestizo world, the Imaginary Mexico. Knowledge can lead to analysis, and these individuals began to raise questions regarding indigenous education. Some of the demands now being made by indigenous groups over education are:

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- Planning and instrumentation of a bilingual education that provides the basis for economic development, cultural renovation, and ethnic identity.
- Development of a specific Indigenous pedagogy, based on the history and cosmology of each ethnic group.
- Promotion of ethnic and cultural pluralism in Mexico.
- Elaboration of bilingual methods and materials for Indigenous education.
- Definition of standard alphabets for the Indigenous languages.
- Design of a complete bilingual system from primary schooling to higher education. (King, 1994)

King concluded,

> If Mexico's ethnic groups are to survive as such, they must retain their own languages, and if these are to compete on an equal status with the official language, they must develop a written form. With the extension of the state apparatus and the increasing need for educational qualifications for entry into the labor market, literacy has acquired an economic value. But is has been the reluctance to afford the Indian languages an equal place with Spanish in the educational context that has posed the greatest threat to the survival in recent years. (1994, p. 68)

Here is where traditional Danza Azteca-Chichimeca comes in to help Náhuatl and Nahua culture survive.

What is Danza (Dance) Azteca-Chichimeca?

The American Heritage Dictionary (1993) defines **dance** "1. To move rhythmically usually to music, using prescribed or improvised steps and gestures." But this definition fails to capture the depth and breadth of indigenous dance practices in the Nahua world. The modern archaeological practice of grave robbing has provided clues to the historical depth of Nahua dance practices amongst Mesoamerican peoples. The finds of human figurines in dance stances from Zacatenco (1500 BC) give a timeline existence for Danza. The eloquent figurines from Tlatilco Morelos demonstrate a highly developed mortuary ceremonialism, including male figures with shaggy costumes associated with animals, suggesting shamanism. Female figurines dancing with cocoon leg rattles impersonated corn spirits (Kurath & Marti, 1964). These are but a small sampling of archeological evidence supporting the existence of Danza as an essential practice amongst Mesoamericans since time immemorial.

One of the oldest indigenous oral versions of how the art of Danza and music came into being can be traced back in time through Tezcatlihpoca. Tezcatlihpoca brought Danza and music so human beings could be happy. Tezcatlihpoca commanded the wind to fetch Danza and music. He sent the

wind to the house of the sun where the singers, musicians, and composers lived. The wind was instructed to go by the seashore at dawn and call Tezcatlihpocas' sea animals, the whale and the sea tortoise. They would take the wind to the sun, just at the break of dawn. There, the wind would sing a special song to the singers, and if they listened to his beautiful song they would have to follow him back to earth. In this way Danza and music were brought to earth to make human beings rejoice and be merry (Sten, 1990). Therefore, Danza is associated with the divine. There exist two opposing feelings for Tezcatlihpoca by Mesoamerican people. One is fear and the other respect, because Tezcatlihpoca can favor you one day and another day he could be your demise. For this reason it was said that Tezcatlihpoca not only made the Toltecs dance, but he also made Huitzilopochtli (Patron of the Aztecs) dance.

It is historically understood that Mesoamericans, along with other native people of this continent, suffered breaks in the continuity of their ancient knowledge. In Mesoamerica, at conquest, the majority of the priest class, the warrior clans, and the intelligencia were slaughtered. This knowledge break has caused great confusion among all the descendants of this continent. The imposition of an antagonistic and alien religion has done nothing more than to further confuse the masses. Anthropologists posthumously have been able to recreate what the colonizers had to destroy to justify the legitimacy of their imposition. From such anthropologists we get merely a glimpse of how these ancient civilizations viewed their universe and their place in it. The documentation of Danza Nahua also suffers from this knowledge break. The Florentine Codex only leaves an external description of what such a tradition was and how it fit into the rest of the cosmovision. What we know of the pre-conquest Danzas comes from the first friars such as Sahagun, Duran, Mendieta, and Motolinia, whose open purpose was not to preserve but rather eliminate these traditions.

The goals of Mesoamerican Danza are to obtain the benevolence of the creator on behalf of the individual and the community and to obtain the fertility of the earth and the abundance of corn, beans, chile, and other consumables, to prevent the dry seasons, to obtain rain and assure the warm of the sun for proper agrarian growth, and to assure victory in war (Sten, 1990). Friars left us scattered information regarding the function of Danza. According to Kurath and Marti (1964), who wrote *The Choreography and Music of Precortesian Dances*, there were 18 ceremonies based on an ecological calendar. These ceremonies dealt with rain, germination, ripening of corn, war victory, hunting, and tribal dead. More specifically, rain was the main objective of most of the ceremonies, especially during the winter season. The crops included beans, corn, flowers, and other domesticated consumables. Not only were the dances and ceremonies controlled by the agrarian calendar used through out Mesoamerica, but people's destinies were governed by the sign they were born under. Certain individuals born under the sign of Ce: Ozomatli (one monkey) were predestined to be singers, dancers, or painters. The ability to dance allowed individuals to acquire prestige. To be able to dance next to a noble was a great honor and privilege. But to falter in the dance movements was considered an offense

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to the creator punishable by death. Faltering also demonstrated lack of discipline within the originator's group. When one group wanted to find the weakness of their warring opponent they would send spies to find out how well and what movements were done in their dances. They could read the strength of their opponent by their ability to dance. In this manner Danza played a powerful role in the lives of Mesoamericans (Sten, 1990).

There were several types of dances, most notably were sacred dances and secular dances. The sacred dances were performed in front of temples and always for the maintenance of the relationship between human beings and the creator. Sacred dances were also performed before and after a war engagement. The secular dances were performed in peoples houses or the market place and concentrated more on merriment and agrarian activities. There was overlapping between agrarian ceremonies and the maintenance of the relationship between human beings and their creator (Sten, 1990).

Danza also had an immense outlook in the cosmovision of indigenous people. Facial paints such as red and yellow were connected with the sun, fertility, and rebirth of nature. The color blue honored Tlaloc (manifestation of rain) and Xiuhteuctli (manifestation of fire), these colors signified abundance. Only men were allowed to paint themselves black. The color white, which is usually associated with death, was rarely found as a facial paint. Facial painting was considered a great privilege because one emulated the manifestations of the creator, because they too painted their faces and body parts. There were many forms of dancing, but the general types were serpentines, circulars, and processions. Serpentine dances were grounded in fertility symbolism and were for guarding the crops from the cold. The circular type were associated with the mythical unification of people. The circle represents perfection, and the dancer in the center represents a singular point of perfection. Processions were mainly executed when one visiting group arrived or left a ceremony. It was considered respectful to arrive in a marching formation, showing great humility and respect for the host. In such a manner the visiting group would put itself under the orders of their host. Again, leaving in proper marching formation was also considered respectful. Within these forms there were mimetic and non-figurative dances. In the mimetic dances, dancers imitated animals, while in the non-figurative dances, dancers entered into altered states of consciousness (Sten, 1990).

According to missionary scholars, Danza served an economic and ceremonial function. The progress of the seasons, the status of the people, dance patterns, music, and spirituality were all holistically interwoven (Kurath & Marti, 1964). Danza threatened the work of missionaries. Padre Acosta and the Pope felt "that the fiestas and celebrations of the Indians should be done in honor of God and the Saint whose feast day they were celebrating" (Stone, 1975, p. 196). The Synod of Mexico went on to say it was a, "Matter of great shame and irreverence for men wearing masks and women's clothing to go before the Sacred Host dancing with obscene and lascivious gestures making noises that interfered with singing of hymns" (Stone, 1975, p. 196). Duran, who was one

of the more conservative of the chroniclers, "Warned his readers that should they see an Indian in better costume than the others, dancing a little apart from his companions and muttering unintelligibly they could be sure that the Indians, while pretending to dance at the Christian fiesta, were actually honoring their pagan gods whose fiestas fell near the same date" (Stone, 1975, p. 196). Stone, in her book *At The Sign of Midnight*, shares her findings regarding the first provincial hearing held in 1555 and the perception of Danza.

> In 1555 the First Provincial Council, meeting in Mexico City, ruled that as the Indians are very inclined to dances, areitos, and other ceremonies, they should not be permitted, while dancing, to use banners or ancient masks that cause suspicions, or to sing songs of their ancient rites or histories, unless said songs were first examined by religious persons, or persons who understood the Indian language well. The Evangelical Ministers should see that such songs did not treat of profane things, but of Christian Doctrine. Also, the Indians should not be permitted to dance before dawn, or before High Mass, and when the bell rang for vespers, they should leave off dancing and attend. Should the Indians fail to abide by these rules, the priests in charge should punish them. Furthermore, the Indians were not to be permitted to have processions on the fiesta date of their village or their churches unless the vicar or minister were present. (1975, p. 197)

In the first 20 post-conquest years Danza was changed completely, leaving only syncretized vestiges of the old traditions.

Consensus as to the origin of Danza among Danzantes does not exist. Most Conchero, or religious dancers, only want to go back to the point of forced Christianization, while academics have argued that Danza has come from Guerrero, Tlaxcala, Queretaro, and still others believe Tlaltelolco (Stone, 1975). From the archeological, historical, oral, and cultural records it is impossible to deny the ancient origin of Danza.

The third provincial council in New Spain in 1585 prohibited the wearing of headdresses by the Indians when they danced because they manifested some sort of idolatry (Stone, 1975). Little is known about Danza owing to religious persecution. Most of the Danza knowledge was maintained by agraphic communities and even then only within selected group members. This means that much of this knowledge does not exist in written form, and it is almost impossible to corroborate.

Some information about Danza from the early 1800's was collected by Martha Stone (1975). Stone joined the Concheros (post-conquest dancers) during the 1940's and participated with them for over 25 years gaining the title of Capitana de Comunidad under Capitan General Manuel Luna. She was able to collect respectable ethnographic material by interviewing Captains of Danza from the 1940's to the 1960's.

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From her findings, the changes in Mexico paralleled those of the Danza. During the revolutionary movement of 1880's Danza Captains were killed. This caused a great break in the knowledge of Danza. It allowed for many opportunistic dancers to take on the emblems of Danza without having the knowledge. This led Vicente Márquez and Natalia Hidalgo to form the Corporation of Concheros, which only recognized legitimate Danza Captains.

During the Cristero war (1930) danzantes were forbidden to dance. In the 1940's indigenista programs became more liberal. There were national attempts to register Danzantes and to request of them licenses for dancing. This proved ineffective, but it did relax the Conchero's religious hold. Now Captains like Natividad Reyna and Manuel Pineda came out with fantasy dances that strayed away from the usual religious expression. From the 1940's on many changes occurred in Danza, such as the reintroduction of the leg rattles, called ayoyotl, and short outfits. In the 1940's Danza was introduced to the big screen by Manuel Pinedo in an Argentine movie. The Huehuetl, a big hollowed out drum for which people were punished for playing by having their hands cut off, was reintroduced only in the last 30 years. These changes caused great concern among the old traditional Concheros, but it allowed Danza to grow and expand as it appealed more to youth.

In the 1960's the civil rights movement challenged the accepted notions of acculturation, and many individuals of Mexican descent, especially the youth, began to question the imposed colonial structure. Among their concerns was the role the Roman Catholic religion played in the invasion of Mexico. The Catholic form of spirituality was challenged, and many of these individuals began to view Danza Azteca-Chichimeca as an organic indigenous spiritual expression. It was in this form that Danza was introduced into the United States. Florencio Yesca and Andres Segura (Armstrong, 1985) are two individuals acknowledged as having introduced Danza into the United States. While Yesca's presentation of danza was more in a cultural context, Segura presented it in a Conchero or traditional form. Yesca's form is concentrated in the Southern California, San Diego, and Tijuana, while Segura's is more visible in the Texas border region. From these two areas, Danza has expanded to Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, Oregon, New York, Arizona, New Mexico, and as far as Chicago.

It is impossible to present a complete history of post-conquest Danza owing to the persecution of marginal groups and the nature of Danza itself. However, cultural residual evidence is observed with similarities encountered in modern Danza practices that still exist on this continent. As early as 1894, the Eagle dance was recognized to have similarities with those found in the Mesoamerican Codices. Winged eagle dancers walking and kneeling movements are fashioned like the Mesoamerican gods, with sacrificial symbols, weeping eyes, and severed heads. Other dances were noticed to have masked warriors fighting head to head in the fashion of the Mesoamerican mimetic dances. The Eagle dance is practiced amongst Iroquois, Pawnee Hako, Mid-

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western Calumet, and in the south it is known as the Death or Buzzard Cult. These dances have become popular on the Pow Wow circuit.

The open round and serpentine dances are a product of the American continent based on growing corn. Further similarities of dance forms are seen in Peru and Panama. The Incas and the Guaymis had serpentine dances related to the protection of the corn crop from the cold and other elements. In the Tohono O'odham (formerly Papago) Wiikita or prayer stick festival, dancers-singers dance in a circle, carrying images of things wanted in abundance. The Anasazi of the Rio Grande River preserve harvest and corn dances that resemble Mesoamerican hand waving. The famous snake dance of the Hopi in Arizona is similar to the Aztec dance of Atamalqualiztli, where the priest chewed on snakes. The Guatemaltecans also have a ceremony involving snake handling by comedians. The Creek, Seminole, Cherokee, and the Northern Iroquois have a secular dance called the "Stomp" (Kurath & Marti, 1964).

Thus we can still find original dance practices that have survived the conquest. The Voladores de Papantla, the flyers of Papantla, appear in the earliest pre-conquest manuscripts. Kurath and Marti describe a ceremony,

> They climb the pole and sit on a platform at the top while a musician invokes the four points of the compass. On signal, the flyers descend on ropes with thirteen revolutions, dance on the grounds, and recede. Each stage of the ceremony has a special tune, played by one musician and a single reed flute called pito and a small, double-headed drum. At night, everyone celebrates with aguardiente and huapangos to fiddle music, at least in Chila, Puebla. (1964, p. 159).

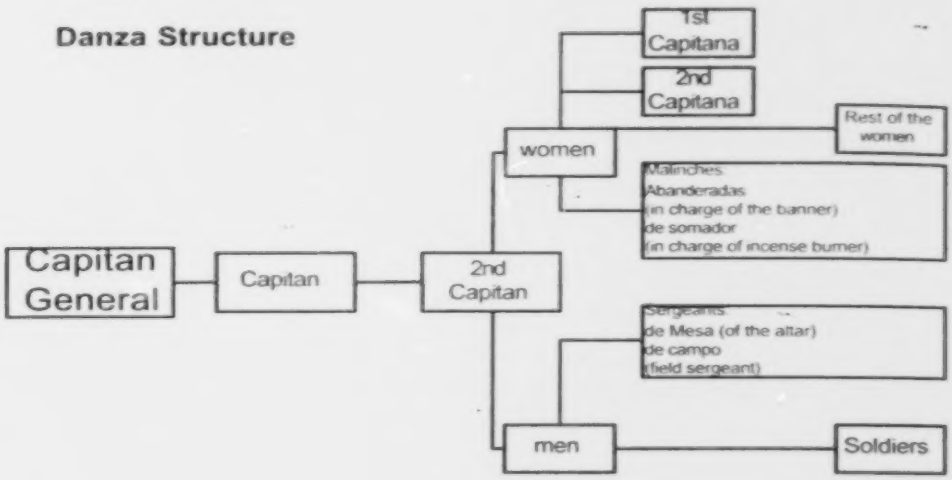
They continue,

> The concheros, a votive society spread from Guerrero to Guanajuato. The members-by-bow hold private rituals to the four cardinal directions, public processions with banners and floral decorations, invocations with songs in a church, a battle of 'Los Rayados' (recalling the Aztec term for striped ones).... The dance includes males and females from three to sixty. The best male dancers recall Moctezuma's professionals, as they leap or bend back in kneeling position. Despite European elements, such as the stringed concha instrument and some steps, they rightly aver their Aztec heritage. (1964, p. 162)

How is danza executed?

The organizational structure of Danza is much like a military organizatio as can be seen in the organizational chart from Armstrong on page 68 (1985, p. 17). The function of the Capitan General is to conquer groups and have them be under his roundtable or mesa. The captain under him manages over a local territory. The second captain can substitute in the captain's place in case of absence. The sergeants are in charge of specific job functions. The sergeant of

the altar is in charge of preparing the alter in every ceremony so that the altar is well prepared and stocked with the appropriate necessities. The field sergeant is in charge of preparations for going on a march. He selects the people to go on a march, making sure of all their necessities. The capitanas take care of the women. They are organized in the same manner as the sergeants and serve the same functions. Underneath this chain of command are the soldiers and women who are referred to as malinches or maquis (Armstrong, 1985).



The most important part of a fiesta, march, or ceremony is the vigil. The vigil is customarily held before a dance. Traditionally vigils started at midnight and would go on to the break of dawn when the dances would follow immediately. Currently, the vigils begin at 8 to 9 p.m. and go till about 3 a.m. with a rest period included. The nature of the vigils deal with esoteric aspects of Danza. Towards the end of the vigil individual dancers are given the honor of leading the dancing portion of the ceremony. A first and second Palabra (those who carry the word or obligation) are selected by the sponsor of the ceremony. These individuals lead the two main columns in a serpentine dance known as "Paso de Camino" or marching step. They will lead the columns and ask the four directions for permission to form the circle. Usually, the elders and children position themselves in the inner circle and the rest of the soldiers are left on the outside circle to protect. The third palabra will be in charge of distributing or selecting who will be given the honor of offering a dance. Between these three palabras/words the ceremony is carried to its final stage. The success of the ceremony will depend on their danza leadership abilities. The dance ceremony stage does not end until the three palabras are symbolically returned to the sponsor of the ceremony/fiesta.

Dancers within the Danza circle are graded on the perceived level of "Obligaccion," or how they fulfill a ceremony. Dancers endure and sacrifice their body and energy to see that a ceremony is completed. Prestige does not

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fall on those who dance the hardest or fastest but rather on those dancers who dance from the heart, "de Corazon."

These are the traditions and obligations that our ancestors have left us; it is the obligation of every danzante to fulfill the motto of "Union, Conformidad, y Conquista", or Union, Conformity, and Conquest. This is the emblem of every danzante. Wherever one goes one enters into union with their host group. If one has chosen to be there it is based on their own will and with the understanding that they must conform to the rules and structure of that particular Capitan. Therefore each ceremony, march, and engagement is a battle where only conquest is the acceptable conclusion.

What are the requirements for revernacularization?

It was necessary to confirm the ancestral culture, spiritual transformation, and linguacide experienced by those that have inherited Danza Azteca-Chichimeca in addition to the different political phases of Mexico that have had a dramatic effect on the lives of indigenous people and their descendants. Resistance and adaptation have maintained the Náhuatl language in its current state. The lack of appropriate educational structures have caused indigenous people within Mexico and outside to reach different alternatives. Groups such as Grupos Unidos (Danza Azteca Huehueteotl, Danza Azteca Tenochtitlan, and other members of Danza groups from the Los Angeles, California area) have found alternatives; appropriate and innovate new ways of recovering an original culture as Danzantes. Historical truths and imposed circumstances require a profound search for the meaning of Danza through its organic mode of expression. Therefore, Danza should be conducted in its original languages. Náhuatl is one of the recognized languages. Having stated a legitimate right to reclaim such a resource, it is necessary to implement programs and visions that will revernacularize Náhuatl as one of the *lingua francas* of the Danza Azteca-Chichimeca. This vision requires a search for different methods, processes, and models for implementation and success. A framework for such a foundation was introduced by Joshua Fishman (1996). Fishman's foundation begins by expressing the need for vernaculars at the infancy phase within the infant's family. These vernaculars are the first set of psycholinguist constructs received by the infant to begin building his/her world, starting from infancy and up to the age five and before the child is enrolled in any education system.

Schools teach and students are required to learn the prescribed curriculum. The school is programmed and not intergenerational. Mother-tongues are intergenerational and not programmed. The school deals with materials foreign to the indigenous child's environment. Intergenerational groups contain intact seniors who are an immense source of linguistic knowledge. Dr. Fishman further points out that,

> Vernacularization is the opposite of institutionalization. Revernacularization requires not only inter-generation language transmission, but societal change. More than a language is involved. If you

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> are going to change the language, you have to change the society. That is, informal society must change its way of living during the long stretch from one generation to the next. Schools do not stretch that long, from one generation to the next. Informal role relationships already established in a new language must come to be implanted in the old language, in order for the old language to be transmitted from parents to children. Parents are already speaking the new language; they have to change themselves, and they need a society that is changing, too, for them to transmit it to a newborn as a mother tongue. Informal topics and places already associated with the new language must come to be associated with the old language, if it is to be transmitted via intimacy and in infancy. (1996, p. 193)

Fishman's research has shown him,

> that it is possible for small groups of quite atypical individuals to rearrange their lives individually and collectively exactly in this revolutionary way. The more dislocated the language is, the smaller those groups will be. A language that is far gone requires a great deal of idiosyncratic support. (1996, p. 194)

Dislocation causes these groups to depend on themselves entirely, rather than outside support. These groups may not succeed completely in achieving their goals, but in the process they are able to create a community of hope. Language-reversal requires an immense amount of hope. Change must involve informal conversions in status-gain, friendship-gain, and affection-gain.

Grupos Unidos represents a coalition of Danzantes from different education levels and ages, from 2 to 76 years, in Los Angeles, California. Few Danzantes have any college education; the majority have limited education. Spanish is the primary language of most of the Danzantes. Few Danzantes understand the mythical/ historical evolution of Danza. Most of the knowledge is concentrated in a few individuals, usually the captain of the Danza group and other self-educated individuals.

Fishman's prescription can be applied to the Danza Azteca-Chichimeca framework. Many of the current trends within Danza, as expressed within the United States, are focusing on intergenerational intimacy with children. Many of the children of Danzantes are given names in Náhuatl such as Citlalli, Ilhuicamina, Tonatiuh, and the like. The act of dancing is always done in an intergenerational and coed environment. Individuals in Danza would be classified as atypical groups of people that have rearranged their lives completely around Danza. It is estimated that 50 thousand to one million danzantes exists within the United States and Mexico. These groups of people have devoted their lives around Danza. Danzantes travel from one ceremony to another fulfilling their obligations to the Danza. Danza also allows the acquiring of personal benefits such as prestige from one's ability to dance. An extended family

is created through participation in Danza. A Danzantes' ability to execute ceremony and Danza gives them recognizable status within the Danza groups. In this manner Danza fulfills Fishman's prescription for a contextual environment for language renewal.

Fishman further requires that individuals have a consciousness of their cultural loss. About two years ago groups encountered dissatisfaction with the current form of disseminating knowledge within Danza. Grupos Unidos came together and joined to implement classes to close the gap between those individuals who had the knowledge and the novice Danzante. Among these classes were lectures on:

- Nahua history from an indigenous perspective,
- A deeper understanding of Danza steps,
- Creation myths,
- Making and playing indigenous instruments, and
- Classical Náhuatl.

With the ongoing lecture series on Classical Náhuatl being most important. The goals with these classes were to develop appropriate self-education and autonomy as Fishman has suggested. Those involved began a tedious process of research on their history, traditions, myths, and language. The resources used where public libraries, university libraries, and elders from Mexico. The result from the studying was a consensus that for Danzantes to penetrate into an organic understanding of their traditions, it was required that Náhuatl be revernacularized.

An informal survey of Danzantes from Grupos Unidos was done to determine indigenous language membership based on point of origin. It was agreed that Náhuatl was the dominate language. From this a decision needed to be made as to what version of Náhuatl Grupos Unidos would be learning. Researching documentation from scholars like Campbell and Karttunen (1989) and Lockhart (1992) contributed towards determining that Classical Náhuatl (or Náhuatl at the point of European contact) was the root to understanding the modern variations. In fact, Classical Náhuatl is one of the most well documented of indigenous languages from this continent. This element was necessary for a group of people who have been completely disconnected from their indigenous language. Reaching this stage of consciousness established a consensual environment for language renewal necessary to begin implementing the process, model, and pedagogy for revernacularizing of Classical Náhuatl.

Through our research we found many classical methods used to acquire a foreign language. Included were elements such as comprehension, memorization, field theory, word morphology, mnemonic devices, grammar, and dictionary usage. Through a series of lectures that lasted over a period of a year, in 1996, and continue to be given once or twice a month, processes listed previously were used to introduce Danzantes to their original language. Class sizes varied from 12 to 30 people.

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A tool that was used extensively was comprehension (Nattinger, 1988). A word list was provided to the student in Náhuatl, English, and Spanish. Every word in the list was explained regarding its meaning and how it was used in a sentence construction. Memorization was a requirement for vocabulary building. Additionally, lists were given where words were paired associates. Implementing the tool of comprehension, the paired associates had sentences presented to provide context and meaning. In the area of Field Theory, as prescribed by German linguist Trier in 1930's, under the assumption that words can be classified by field, we presented students with vocabulary lists with some example field sets (Carter, 1988).

Time adverbs:	Achtopa	first	primero
Quantity:	tepitzi:n	little bit	poquito
Interrogatives	ca:nin	where?	Donde?
Pronouns:	nehhua:tl	I	Yo
Numbers:	o:me	two	dos
Place adverbs:	nica:n	here	aqui
Indefinite pronouns:	Acah	someone	alguien
Negation:	ahmo:	no	no
Animals:	a:zcatl	ant	hormiga
Plants:	xo:chitl	flower	flor
People:	cihtli	grandmother	abuela
Agents:	a:mapo:huani	reader	alguien que lee libros
Places:	calli	house	casa
Things:	cactli	shoe	zapato
Food:	nacatl	meat	carne
Colors:	nexic	blue-gray	gris
Body parts:	e:huatl	skin	piel

For word morphology a copy of Huitztzilmazatzin's *Schematic Grammar of Classical Náhuatl* was used to present the grammar and word morphology. Whenever possible, loci, or cognitive mappings, were used to help with memorization. Danzas still maintain indigenous names, for example Mayahuel, Tezcatlihpoca, Huitzilopochtli, and Tonantzin, and the meaning of the names were explained.

A model that has been extremely successful for language transmission has been the Asher's (1996) Total Physical Response (TPR) method. The new language is introduced as a series of imperatives that link language with overt actions performed by Danzantes. Danza is a dramatic artform that lends itself to Asher's method. Songs were recovered from Sahagun's Florentine Codex and the Canteres Mexicanos. These songs went through a process of retranslation and were arranged to be sung and danced. Some elements that needed to be considered were current styles of songs being sung today. Most of the music corpus of the Danzantes has been inherited from the Conchero style of singing. This style involves one individual singing a stanza, and the rest of the group responds with the same stanza. This method was used to insure transmission of the songs, and it only required one person to remember the song. This was a common singing practice. The songs recovered where done in the same man-

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ner. From this process of reintegrating Náhuatl songs, a song book was produced that was distributed to the Danza Groups. At ceremonies individuals from Grupos Unidos would sing the new Náhuatl songs instead of the old style Conchero songs (alabanzas).

One last tool that was used were dictionaries. As Della Summers (1988) has stated in her essay, "The role of dictionaries in language learning,"

> Dictionaries for language learning have been largely ignored in the wealth of books and articles on language learning by linguists, psychologists, and language teachers. There is a strong insistence that words should not be thought of individually, or 'in isolation', and dictionaries are seen as reinforcing the students' tendency to learn individual words when acquiring a second language. (p. 111)

Dictionaries were used for differentiation of similar words, drawing the attention of readers to similar words, and for examples of usage (see the Appendix for a short bibliography of dictionaries). Most of the dictionaries were no longer in print, and it became necessary to produce our own. Another problem with the dictionaries was that most of them only went one way, Náhuatl to English or Náhuatl to Spanish, with the exception of Molina's dictionary, which also had Spanish to Náhuatl. We produced three dictionaries that where focused on usage: Náhuatl to English (16,917 words), English to Náhuatl (15,758 words), and Spanish to Náhuatl (2,221 words). These dictionaries contained cross-referenced words that exist in published dictionaries. Another important difference is that our dictionaries are geared towards word production versus word analysis.

Traditionally most language reversal projects have met with the problem of not being able to reach enough people and then stagnating. Danza Azteca-Chichimeca solves this problem with its inter-connectivity. Danzantes travel all the way from San Francisco, California, to Mexico City. In this manner the structure of Danza lends itself extremely well to the dissemination of information, goods, and current dress styles. Grupos Unidos have been using this inherent quality of Danza to disseminate songs, grammar books, self-produced dictionaries, and exercises north to San Francisco California, east to Texas, and south into Mexico.

Conclusion

Early on, requirements were set for reacquiring a lost culture, spirituality, and language. Historical events form the foundation and reassure the rightfulness in reclaiming an original cultural expression. There has been a disconnection from an original language through the imposition of a conqueror's language that many continue to espouse through ignorance and conditioning. An external spirituality continues to be defended that does not address connectiveness to the land. Again, ignorance perpetuates the minimization of an organic culture, spirituality, and the lack of a truthful historical record. It is

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necessary to move from the realm of mimicking to the realm of expressing a deep understanding of an organic culture. This will only be possible through the revernacularization of original languages. As it was pointed out in the 1995 Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium by Joshua Fishman (1996), critical mass is the true measure of a successful language reversal program. While Grupos Unidos is unable to claim numerically the success of their programs, outside groups have recognized the validity of their programs. The indicators used to measure success are demonstrated when other groups have learned and sung the songs that were introduced a year before. It is impossible to restore Náhuatl as a full blown language, but at least we can hope for some measurable functional bilingualism. An attempt is being made to build a community of hope through Danza circles, to become strong, to continue to resist, to continue to appropriate, and to innovate. These qualities along with the structures that exist within the Danza will allow for hope to see the vision to fruition.

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